

# MICHIGAN STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY

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Senate Judiciary Committee  
Room 110  
Farnum Building  
125 W. Allegan  
Lansing, MI 48933

Good afternoon. I am Steve Japinga, Chief of Public Policy and Legislative Affairs at the Michigan State Medical Society. Thank you Chairman Jones, Vice Chairman Bieda and the Committee members for allowing me this time to speak with you.

Today I am speaking on behalf of the 15,000 physician members of the Michigan State Medical Society.

The ability of any profession to regulate itself is predicated on the ability of the public to trust in the actions of the profession's regulatory body, none more so than the Michigan Board of Medicine.

Recently, due to the failure of a member of the Board of Medicine to recuse himself from a case review in which a potential conflict of interest existed, the public trust in the Board of Medicine has been diminished.

Michigan physicians understand that the trust patients place in their profession is sacred, something that must be earned every single day, by every single physician, whether it's in an examination room, an operating room, or even in a conference room.

When an incident like this occurs and gains public attention, it not only casts doubt upon the Board of Medicine, but it also threatens *every* doctor-patient relationship because it weakens the trust that physicians have spent generations building. The Michigan State Medical Society takes this *very* seriously.

Despite the negative effects of this incident, it does provide us with the opportunity to look more closely at the policies and procedures of the Board of Medicine, and use it as an opportunity to re-establish the Board as the ethical and principled entity that every physician knows it is.

Self-regulation by professional boards has been a highly successful regulatory model because standards for conduct can best be addressed by those professionals who have firsthand knowledge of the profession. Therefore, it is our hope that any legislative efforts attempt to



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preserve the autonomy of the Board of Medicine and that changes do not interfere with the ability to handle disciplinary matters in a timely fashion.

The Michigan State Medical Society appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding this matter. In addition, it is our hope that we continue to be a partner with this Committee to craft a solution that restores the public's trust in the Board of Medicine. We look forward to working with you in this effort.